AQUACULTURE WITHOUT FRONTIERS
HELPING DEVELOP “RESTRUCTURED” FISH PRODUCTS IN MEXICO

Newly appointed UTMarT Rector, Dr. Antonio Garza de Yta, has created a buzz, which you can feel with both the staff and students and extends to the local industry and community. With assistance of the State Government, UTMarT is working with the local fishermen and their cooperative organisers in offering specific education opportunities to the children of the fishermen, helping to bridge communication between all parties.

One of the programs starting to take shape because of these new liaisons is the Restructured Fish program, which creates new products for the market from underutilized species and “waste fish.” This is employing local women while helping to feed schoolchildren. Everyone sees this as a win-win arrangement, which solves many problems. Unwanted or waste fish are a major issue in many countries so this approach is something that could be transferred to any country.

Many assorted products were designed using the skills and imagination of the talented staff and students at UTMarT. After trialing, products were locked in with recipe and manufacturing instructions. Women from the community were then trained to prepare the products, which are used to feed schoolchildren. Everyone sees this as a win-win arrangement, which solves many problems. Unwanted or waste fish are a major issue in many countries so this approach is something that could be transferred to any country.

In various parts of the world many species of fish are discarded because they are not popular and much fish is wasted through poor processing or infrastructure so the program highlights what can be done if people work together. The next phase is to work with the community and local conservation groups in improving the mangroves in the area. The initial plan is to create a mangrove restoration centre, which will encourage students and members of the community to work together. UTMarT’s staff will build study programs around mangroves in the area. The initial plan is to create a mangrove restoration centre, which will encourage students and members of the community to work together.

Environmental issues such as these are typically far away from the minds of people who are struggling to obtain food to survive or who are trading products globally. There clearly needs to be more education and engagement in understanding the consequences; if we are not getting those important messages through to the industry, then it will be even harder to get them through to the public.

UTMarT is working with the Tamaulipas State government and the various Mexican national government authorities to organize a Rural Aquaculture Conference where discussions on subjects like these can take place and practical workshops can be arranged. AwF will be engaged in this effort, and welcomes inputs from interested parties.